



Former union minister G.K. Vasana launched website and android application of his new party

Sabhas are remaining as bridge between musicians and fans — R. Nataraj Former DGP



SHORT TAKES

43 countries to get e-visa facility

New Delhi: Visitors from over 40 countries, including Germany, the US, Israel and Palestine, will soon be able to avail the much-awaited electronic visa facility which is set to be launched on November 27. The e-visa facility for 43 countries would be rolled out by Home Minister Rajnath Singh along with Tourism Minister Mahesh Sharma here, said a senior Tourism Ministry official. "It would be a historic occasion for the tourism sector as we were demanding this facility for long. The launching of e-visa system for so many countries would boost the industry," said Indian Association of Tour Operators President Subhas Goyal. The software for the system, are now ready and would become operational at nine international airports -- Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram and Goa. — PTI

Citizen scientists vital for conservation

Kolkata: Citizen scientists are playing a significant role in conservation of wildlife by contributing to increased environmental awareness among the masses, according to a new study. Researchers from Duke University surveyed 'citizen scientists' who have volunteered with two Bangalore-based NGOs Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Centre for Wildlife Studies and found that citizen science projects greatly contributed to increased environmental awareness among the general public. Since 1990s, over 4000 such volunteers have been trained by WCS to survey wildlife populations and local communities across several Indian states including Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and others. — PTI

OTHER STORY

DEFECTIONS A CONSPIRACY: RAJAPAKSA

Colombo: Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapaksa has said he would not be deterred by "conspiracies" hatched by opposition parties, after the No 2 in his Cabinet defected to challenge him in the January 8 election. He said the defection of Maithripala Sirisena, who was his health minister, to the opposition was a conspiracy against him. "We will not be deterred by (such) conspiracies. We will continue with our work," Rajapaksa said at a gathering in north-central province yesterday. Sirisena, 63, defected to opposition on Friday and announced that he would contest the January 8 polls and challenge Rajapaksa, who is seeking an unprecedented third term. — PTI



Fifth Anniversary
G. Sharada Devi
on this day of 24-11-2009
Fondly remembered & inserted by
Gudalore Family

On Mekedatu project Call all-party meeting: PMK

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 23

PMK founder, Dr S. Ramadoss, urged the state government on Sunday to convene an all-party meeting and a special Assembly session to discuss the Karnataka government's decision to construct two dams across the Cauvery at Mekedatu. In a statement issued here, he said the state would be deprived of its share of Cauvery water if Karnataka went ahead to construct the dams at Mekedatu with a capacity to store 48 thousand million cubic feet.

He condemned BJP leader from Karnataka and Union minister Ananthkumar for making a statement that the Centre would give approval for the Mekedatu project. "As per the Constitution, a Union minister should represent the whole country and should not act with bias towards any ethnic group, language and region. But Ananthkumar is acting like a Karnataka state minister," he said and slammed Ananthkumar and Sadananda Gowda for blocking the setting up of the Cauvery management board.

Even as Karnataka Chief Minister K. Siddaramaiah was planning to meet



Dr S. Ramadoss

Prime Minister Modi with an all-party delegation on the issue, Dr Ramadoss said the Tamil Nadu government had not taken any initiative other than Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam writing a letter to the Prime Minister and announcing that a case will be filed against it in the Supreme Court.

He said there was a need to use political pressure on the issue. "To discuss the issue, an all-party meeting should be held and the Assembly should be convened. The resolutions adopted against the Mekedatu project in the meetings should be handed over to the Prime Minister by the Chief Minister-led, all-party delegation," he demanded.



Members of Nadar Peravai stage a demonstration near the residence of AICC member Karti Chidambaram for his remarks against Congress icon Kamaraj in Nungambakkam on Sunday. — DC

3 NEW CHILD HELPLINE CENTRES TO COVER 500 TOWNS

New Delhi, Nov. 23: Looking to provide prompt help to distressed children across the country, the government has decided to open three new child helpline centres in Kolkata, Gurgaon and Chennai which will cover 500 cities and towns. Childline, the 24-hour

helpline started in 1996 and based in Mumbai, currently reaches out to 282 locations across India with the help of 543 partners, among which are the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and Tata Consultancy Services. "We are opening three centres: in Kolkata, Chennai and in Gurgaon.

Apart from that, the service reach (of the centres) will be expanded to 500 cities and towns in about two years," Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi PTT. The three new centres would be nodal bases providing service to the rest of the locations.

"The aim is to enable a child in need to get prompt help," said Gandhi. According to a ministry official, it is becoming difficult for the Mumbai centre to attend to all the calls made to the helpline as there is a large number of these, resulting in many calls getting abandoned. — PTI

Fertiliser shortage hits farmers



MDMK leader Vaiko participated in a marathon along with students on Madukkarai road in Coimbatore to create awareness on prohibition Sunday. — DC

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 23

Farmers have been hit by an acute shortage of fertilisers at the height of the paddy growing season in the state. Due to shortage of fertilisers, they are forced to buy urea and DAP at double the cost in the open market, said MDMK general secretary Vaiko.

In a statement here, Mr Vaiko said last year, through cooperative societies, urea was sold at a cost of ₹270 per 50 kg bag while DAP cost about ₹1,125.

"With the inadequate stock of fertilisers in the agricultural cooperative societies, farmers are purchasing fertilisers from the open market, but a 50 kg bag of urea is being sold at a price of ₹500 and DAP, at ₹1,500," he said.

The MDMK leader said even if farmers were willing to purchase fertilisers at very high cost, traders are illegally hoarding it to create artificial scarcity. Farmers have been staging protests against the shortage of urea for the last two weeks across the

state but the government denies any scarcity in fertilisers, he charged.

Blaming the Centre's fertiliser policy for the present situation, he said the closure of Madras Fertilisers Ltd, Mangalore Fertilisers Ltd and SPIC was due to stopping of the supply of subsidised naphtha. "This not only created as shortage of fertilisers but also a price rise," he said, urging the governments to take steps to make available adequate quantities of fertilisers through cooperative societies.

VAIKO SEEKS PROHIBITION IN TN

Coimbatore, Nov. 23: With the demand for total prohibition in TN gaining momentum, the MDMK on Sunday organised a marathon for students to create awareness among the public on the ills of liquor.

After flagging off the marathon which saw the participation of about 6,000 students, MDMK general secretary Vaiko said liquor was introduced in TN to increase the revenue of the government. But it ruins the future of youths and their families.

There was no liquor during the rule of late Kamaraj and C.N. Annadurai in the state, but successive governments, in order to fill their coffers, were depending on the increasing revenue from the sale of liquor, he alleged. He also took part in the marathon.

PEOPLE WITH EPILEPSY CAN LEAD NORMAL LIFE: EXPERTS

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 23

People with epilepsy, a neurological disorder, can lead a normal life, with women affected with it being able to beget children. What was important was that they should not conceal the disorder from their partners, said experts at the 'Epilepsy

Knowledge Forum', organised by Neurokrish, the city-based neurosciences group, to mark 'National Epilepsy Day 2014' on Sunday.

"A decade ago, epilepsy came under the Mental Health Act and that led to a number of divorce cases. Now, it is not considered a disability. What we need is

transparency and nothing should be concealed before the wedding," said Dr E.S. Krishnamoorthy, founder and director of Neurokrish, adding that patients could take up regular jobs but avoid high-risk ones.

There are 10 million people with epilepsy in India and roughly 10 per 1,000 people have it.



Dr E.S. Krishnamoorthy

CAMPAIGN | LAUNCHED

Activating GPS in phones to identify location is one of the safety measures

Students take pledge to keep women safe

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 23

The safety and security of women is essential for the well-being of the country and nobody should indulge in any activity that would harass or abuse any woman, said the pledge that was taken by around 2,200 people from the District Rotaract Council, 3,230 from other colleges such as MOP Vaishnav College and WCC at a rally to create awareness on women's safety on Sunday.

Organised by Round Table India and Mart 100, social service organisations in association with Survival Inst-

incts, an authorised provider of the American Red Cross health and safety training program, it took place at Marina beach in commemoration of the United Nations International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women.

The rally was flagged off by Dr Visalakshi Nendunchian, chairperson, Tamil Nadu state women's commission and she led the group in taking the pledge to eliminate violence against women.

As part of the campaign, college students performed mime in various city schools, highlighting the issues faced by women. It also portrayed ways to stay safe and handle

abuse. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), there were 3,09,546 crimes against women reported to police last year, against 2,44,270 in 2012. "When we all raise our voices against harassment of women, it will not be a bumpy ride for women's safety. Even calling the police station and informing them about an incident makes a difference," said Anoop R. Madhavan, founder of Survival Instincts. He added that activating GPS and software in mobile phones to identify one's location are ways we can use technology to keep ourselves safe.



S. Lakshmi IPS, Deputy Commissioner - Traffic (South) reads the pledge as the participants take oath to protect women and not to be a bystander. — DC



Dr C. Vijaya Baskar

Minister speaks up for doctors

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 23

Health minister, Dr C. Vijaya Baskar, on Sunday asked political parties not to hurt the sentiments of government doctors and nurses who worked with a service-oriented motive by issuing statements to gain political mileage out of the Dharmapuri newborns death issue.

Trained and experienced doctors are working not only in Dharmapuri's government hospitals, but also in other neonatal intensive care units (NICU) across the state, and so there is no question of lack of experience among doctors, said the health minister in a statement. He added that a team sent from the Institute of Child Health, Egmore, was also monitoring the infants admitted to the Dharmapuri NICU continuously.

Since November 15, a total of 101 infants had been discharged after undergoing treatment.

"A total of 186 doctors and 243 nurses are working at the Dharmapuri hospital, and at present, 30 nurses are paying special attention to newborns in the neonatal intensive care unit. There are 45 baby warmers, 10 phototherapy and 20 ventilator facilities available at the hospital," informed the minister.

In Dharmapuri district alone 3,353 infants lost their lives between 2006 and 2010. But, this has come down to 1,834 from 2011 till date, he said. The government has established 64 NICU and 114 newborn stabilisation units across Tamil Nadu to provide treatment to newborns with health problems. Before launching the NICU project, there was no other speciality treatment available for newborns; this project has now benefited 90 per cent of infants admitted to various centres, he said.

6,000 take part in city night marathon

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 23

More than 12 crore Indians suffer from organ failure and over 10 lakh Indians need organ transplants every year, said renowned liver transplant surgeon and founder of 'Love your Liver Foundation', Dr Anand K. Khakhar, at the night marathon organised by Apollo Hospitals in the city on Saturday.

Over 6,000 people participated in the marathon to raise awareness on organ donation and also for maintenance of a healthy liver. Actor Suriya, who flagged off the marathon, said 'Love your liver and live your life'.

Liver disease is a silent killer and, generally, by the time the symptoms show, it is too late for medical treatment. Several forms of liver disease affect adults and children alike and timely intervention can help save precious lives, said Dr Khakhar, adding that the liver is the only organ that can regenerate, making living donor liver transplantation a safe procedure.

Pledging her own organs at the marathon, vice-chairperson of Apollo, Dr Preetha Reddy, said the marathon was an effort to break the myths and reservations associated with organ donation.

Transplant recipients, doctors and students participated in the marathon.